

Talk Is Cheap, Obedience Is Costly

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Preacher: John Berry

[0:00] I had the privilege of being on his ordination council a couple years ago and have gotten to know him and see his love for the Lord and love just serving him. And so we've asked Brother Barry to come this morning and share with you what God has laid upon his heart here for us.

Like Pastor Smith said, my name is John Barry. It is an honor to be here. And like you said, he was on my ordination council. Probably one of the harder pastors to ask questions.

I'm not going to hold that against him, but anyways. This morning, we're going to be over in Matthew chapter 21. So we're going to go ahead and turn there.

I just wanted that to be great. We're looking at talk is cheap and obedience is costly. As we open this morning, there's a story of a father who shared something that happened when his son David was about five years old.

They attended a church where it was customary for the preacher to invite children to the front of the church for a brief message just for the children. And on one particular morning, the pastor brought out a smoke detector and asked the children if anyone knew what it meant when that alarm goes off.

[1:08] Without hesitation, David shot his hand into the air and said, it means dad is cooking dinner tonight. You know, dads, they seem to be the punchline of a lot of jokes. But not to be left out, a mother once asked her young son, why do you always do what your grandmother tells you, but you always argue with me?

Without missing a beat, he answered, well, that's because grandma does not tell me as much as you do. And it's funny because there's a lot of truth behind that. You know, we naturally, we resist being told what to do.

Whether it's parents, it's teachers, employers, or even God himself, our sinful nature does not like authority. And for years, television shows, movies, commercials, they have increasingly portrayed fathers and mothers and other authority figures as incompetent, clueless, useless, unnecessary. They're often the object of ridicule rather than respect. And instead of being shown as wise leaders, they're depicted as obstacles that you should overcome or they're jokes to just endure.

And whether intentional or not, those repeated messages, they shape the way that society and the way that people think. Respect for authority, it has steadily eroded in our culture, not just in the home, but in schools, in the workplace, in government, and even in churches today.

[2:42] You know, we live in a day when many people, they don't want anyone telling them what to do. Independence, it is celebrated. Submission is criticized.

Obedience is often viewed as a weakness. In this attitude, it's not a new one. By the time we come to Matthew chapter 21, the religious leaders, they are openly challenging the authority of Jesus Christ.

Rather than just submitting to him, they are questioning him. And in response, Jesus tells a simple parable about a father giving instruction to his two sons.

And on the surface, it just seems like a story, a parable about a family. But in reality, it's a story about authority, obedience, and the difference between saying the right thing and actually doing the right thing.

And as we look at our section of scripture this morning, the issue in this parable, it isn't whether these sons knew what their father wanted. Both of them knew what their father wanted them to do.

[3:49] The issue was whether they are going to obey the father. And that's still the question that God asks every one of us still today. So if you haven't already, please turn over to Matthew 21.

We're going to look at verses 28 through 32 this morning. It says, But what think he? A certain man had two sons. And he came to the first and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard.

But he answered and said, I will not. But afterward he repented and went. And he came to the second and he said, Likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir, and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father. They sent him the first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and he believed him not. But the publicans and the harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward that ye might believe him.

[4 : 53] So this parable, it's not nearly as well known as, say, the prodigal son or the good Samaritan, but it packs a lot in these few verses.

It's short, and it is relatively easy to understand. But before we jump into tearing this section of Scripture apart and looking at what it has for us today, we need to put the text in context and see what's going on here, okay?

So it's now the last week of Jesus' life here on earth, and the religious leaders, they're having kind of a final face-off with Christ. In particular, they're challenging his authority.

Matthew chapter 21, it begins with Jesus making his triumphal entry into Jerusalem in verses 1 through 11. Then you get to verses 12 through 17, we have the story of him clearing out the money changers from the temple.

In verse 15 here, it tells us that the chief priests and scribes, they become displeased with him. In the Greek, the word displeased, it's *agoneteo*, and it means they were moved to indignation, filled with anger, annoyance, or outrage, sparked by something perceived as unfair, unjust, or unworthy, and they are filled with this when they see the wonderful things that Christ has done.

[6 : 14] In verse 15, it also says, and when they saw the children crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David. Now, on the next morning, in verses 18 through 22, Jesus, he curses the fig tree and he enters into the temple again.

And while he is teaching here, the religious leaders, they challenge him by asking him, where does your authority come from? And in verse 23, it says, by what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority? And as Jesus often does when dealing with these religious leaders, he has said, he asks them a question. Let's look at verses 24 and 25. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also ask you one thing, which if you tell me, I am likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or of men? Now, these religious leaders, they are afraid to give an answer because the scriptures say that they reasoned in themselves that essentially Christ has them stuck in a lose-lose question.

Let's read the rest of verse 25. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, if we shall say from heaven, he will say unto us, why did you not believe him? But if we shall say of men, we fear the people, for all hold John as a prophet.

[7 : 36] So they respond in verse 27 by saying, we cannot tell. All right? Then Jesus says, neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

And verse 28, it introduces our parable for today. And it begins with another question directed to these religious leaders. But what think he?

So we're going to look closely at this parable to discover that what we do is more important than what we say we will do. So we're going to see two contrasts here, all right? Two contrasts, and we have the first contrast, we're going to look at the very first son.

The father, he has some work that he needs done. So he goes to the first son and says, son, go work today in my vineyard. I believe that there's kind of a tenderness here of the father as he calls his boy son.

The father, he loves his son and uses an intimate term here of endearment that reveals that he has a desire for a close relationship. This command, it does carry with it, though, both authority and affection.

[8 : 44] He's not a tyrant, authoritarian figure, but he does tell his son, go work. This is a reasonable request because there is work to be done and a child needs to learn how to work.

And it's urgent, go work today, all right? He doesn't say, hey, tomorrow go work or, hey, when you can fit this into your schedule, go work.

And he says, go work today. And notice that the first son, he answers abruptly and very abrasively, I will not. Now, I don't know about you, but if my father said, go work, I said, I will not, I'd have to

duck because there'd probably be a fist or two coming.

And pastor, you know my father, you know, that fist is coming. I mean, I will not, I'm not going to do this. Now, this is kind of a similar attitude of the people in Jeremiah 44, 16, when the prophet Jeremiah is bringing judgment.

This is coming and the people in Jeremiah 44, 16 says, as for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. I will not. After thinking about it for a while, though, the son, as you continue on in scriptures, is afterward, he repented and went.

[9:52] And the word repented here means to care afterwards. That is regret. This son, maybe he's thinking about what he said, maybe the way he said it, what he did.

We see that he changes his mind and he heads out to the vineyard to work. His change of mind, it led to a change in his manner. Perhaps he regretted his bad attitude.

Perhaps he regrets the way that he talked to his father. Maybe he realized, you know, my father, he loves me. My father cares for me. Maybe it's breaking through his hard heart that his father loves him.

We don't really know exactly what happened, but we do know that he went and he worked in the vineyard. But now let's look at a second son here. The second son is given the same command. Son, go and work. The Bible says, it says, and likewise. Son, go and work today. But instead of responding disrespectfully, he replies to his father, I go, sir.

[10:51] Verse 30, he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir. On the surface, this son is compliant. He is respectful. But we quickly realize that he's just saying what he thinks his dad wants to hear.

He had no intention of obeying because we continue on. And he answered, said, I go, sir, and went not. Failing to go after promising to go was actually worse than refusing outright because he had not only disobeyed his father, but he has also lied to his father.

He called his dad, sir, unlike the other brother who just flat out said, no, I'm not doing this. Looking good was more important than doing good to this second son.

The first son says, I will not, but he did. The second son says, I will go, but he did not. That reminds me of an illustration, but also something I know every single person here has probably done at one time in one way or another.

Derek was a strong-willed, rebellious third grader who was always getting in trouble with his teacher. One day, he could not stay in his seat and was constantly standing up and walking around.

[12:06] After numerous warnings and threats, the teacher finally told him that if he didn't sit down, he would not get to go to recess. Derek slumped down into his seat. The teacher walked over and said, thank you for listening to me and sitting down.

Derek replied to the teacher, I may be sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside. These two sons have two very different attitudes, different answers, different actions.

The first son, though initially strong-willed, he does go and work. He was rebellious, but he repented. The second son, he talked a good game, but he just stayed.

He laid around the house. He could talk the talk, but he did not walk the walk. So then Jesus asked a question with an obvious answer in verse 31. Whether them twain did the will of his father.

I'm sure these religious leaders, they didn't really want to answer because they would be essentially condemning themselves, but they say unto him, the first. These religious leaders, they were always looking for another question that they thought would trap Jesus and undermine his authority.

[13:22] Yet every attempt always backfired on them. Jesus consistently turned their own questions against them, exposing their hypocrisy and leaving them speechless.

And instead of trapping Christ, they always ended up trapping themselves. You would think after so many failed attempts, they would have finally had just stopped.

Every time we try this, it fires back on us. But pride is a way of convincing people that they can outsmart God. So looking at these two sons, now we got to look at the point of the parable here, okay?

There are really two different groups represented by this parable. Okay, let's look at verse 31.

Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

So first, let's look at the rebellious who repent. Now, according to the religious leaders and their beliefs, they believe that the publicans, which would be tax collectors and harlots, prostitutes, they

would have no part in the kingdom of God.

[14 : 29] Jesus could not have chosen a much more offensive comparison by saying that they will pass the religious leaders on the way to heaven. The publicans, they were viewed as traitors.

They were viewed as corrupt because they worked with Rome. And these publicans, they made a living skimming off the top and cheating the people.

While harlots, they were seen as morally unclean and outside the bounds of respectable society. To the religious leaders, neither of these two groups were acceptable.

They were seen as the outcasts. They were seen as the lowest rung on the social ladder, also the spiritual ladder. God wants nothing to do with these people. But a quick side note, I personally would not be surprised at all if some of these religious leaders were making some extra money on the side with some of these publicans.

I would definitely not be surprised if some of these religious leaders knew some harlots on a first-name basis. But aren't you glad, though, that no matter what you have done or how long you have done it, God's grace is available to the worst of sinners?

[15 : 43] Sinners like publicans. For instance, Matthew and Zacchaeus and prostitutes, they responded to Christ throughout his ministry. I love what Paul said about himself in 1 Timothy 1.15.

He had persecuted Christians and put them to death. You might think, hey, that disqualifies him. He was killing Christians. But he writes these words right here.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all exception, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. God uses the example of the most extreme sinners that we can think of to show that his grace covers all of our sins.

Just listen to Mark 2.16-17, a section of Scripture where we see the Pharisees, publicans, and sinners being referenced again. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, how is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, they that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

[16 : 51] If you feel like a failure today because of maybe poor choices you've made or sinful actions, and you've convinced yourself that God could never want anything to do with you, here is the good news.

You are exactly the kind of person that Jesus came to save. The kingdom of God is open to all who repent and believe. And if you've been doing the wrong way for a long time, it's not late to repent today.

No matter how far that you have wandered or how long you have resisted him, God is a God of second chances. If you'll come to him today, he'll gladly accept you.

A man was told how he spent years arguing against Christianity online. He would jump into comment sections, mock believers, twist scripture, pride himself on winning debates online.

One night after a long argument, someone simply replied with a verse and said, I just want you to know that I am praying for you. The man couldn't shake that. That night he opened a Bible, not to learn from it, but I'm going to finally prove it wrong.

[18 : 02] But the more he read, the more unsettled the man became. Weeks later, that same man who once mocked scripture was sitting in a church service, Bible open, tears in his eyes because the word that he had tried to tear down and broken through finally has broken through to this man.

There's a woman who shared how she used to roll her eyes anytime anyone would talk about their faith. If a co-worker mentioned church, she'd just quickly change the subject or make a joke.

But after walking through a personal crisis, she found herself remembering things that she had once just dismissed. One evening alone in her home, she searched for a Bible that she had been given years earlier.

Sitting there, she began to read. And for the first time, she wasn't reading to criticize, but to understand. And before long, the one who had just brushed it off was finally on her knees asking God for mercy.

Now those might just be some generalized illustrations, but I've heard many stories like that. But those stories reflect the reality of what God is still doing today.

[19 : 10] For instance, here at Plains Baptist Church, I'm sure you have seen people from every kind of background who have been saved by faith in Jesus Christ. You've probably witnessed

people here who have come to Christ, followed Him in baptism.

You support missionaries who could tell you story after story of souls being saved, lives being transformed, and churches planted around the world. And all of that is a living proof that God's mercy and grace are not reserved for a few religious elite.

They are freely offered to all who come to Him in genuine repentance and in faith. The beauty of God's grace is on full display in Ezekiel chapter 18, 21 through 23.

But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed and keep all my statutes and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him. In his righteousness they hath done, he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God?

[20:17] And not that he should return from his ways and live? The gospel is a story of God turning sinners into the redeemed children of God.

After giving a long list of sins, Paul reminds believers that their past does not define them in 1 Corinthians 6, verse 11. Because it says, and such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

The rebellious who repent are the first group that's represented here in this parable. But now let's take a look at that second group that's represented. We have the religious who rebel.

The first son, he rebelled initially, but the second son's response, response, it was just completely empty. What we do is more important than what we say we're going to do.

The religious, they know the right reply. They know what to say, what to do, but their lives don't match up with their lips because their walk is not connected with their talk.

[21:28] Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 15, verse 8, which is really just a quote from Isaiah 29, 13. This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Jesus even calls them out in Matthew 23, 2 through 3, saying, The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.

But do not ye after their works, for they say and do not. The majority of Christians today they know what to say. They know all the Christian lingo, but they would rather play than pray.

They would rather get than give. They would rather be entertained than exercise their gifts. They would rather wine than work in the Father's vineyard. Friends, it's not your religious reputation, but it's your repentance that matters.

Here's some tough questions that we should really ask ourselves. How many times have I sung words that speak of obedience and yet I did nothing to act on that which I professed?

[22:36] How many times have I promised to pray for someone, but I didn't do it? How many times have I asked God to lead me and I just ignored His leading? How many times have I told the Lord that I would serve Him when times are tough, only to forget about Him when times got better?

Listen to Matthew 21, 32. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed Him not, but the publicans and harlots believed Him. The religious, they refused to believe John the Baptist and repent.

The rebellious, on the other hand, they heard what John had to say and they were repenting. Jesus then points out that these religious leaders, they should have been moved to action by watching the transformation that took place in the lives of the rebellious, but they remained unrepentant.

They wanted nothing to do with it. So we read this in the last part of Matthew 21, 32. And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward that ye might believe Him.

When we, so this morning we took time, we looked at these two sons here in this parable. We looked at the two groups of people that they represent.

[23:51] What we're going to do now is we're going to take some time and we're going to focus on the Father in this parable who represents our Heavenly Father. It's really the Father's focus and there's, I think, five things we're going to look at fairly quickly.

But here are some truths that come to mind about the Father. One, the Father is fond of you. If you're a Christian, He calls you son or daughter. If you doubt God's love for you, listen to these words from Zephaniah 3, 17.

The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. He will save. He will rejoice over thee with joy. He will rest in His love. He will joy over thee with singing.

The Father loves you. Second, the Father's will is that we work. There is much to do in His vineyard and we don't really have the option of opting out.

Hey, I don't want to do this. A person who claims to follow Christ but refuses to serve others is living a contradiction. 1 Peter 4, 10. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

[25 : 03] And maybe you're sitting there thinking to yourself, well, I don't know how to serve. I don't know where to serve. I don't know what it means to serve. Just go talk to Pastor Smith. I guarantee you, he can find somewhere for you to serve.

All right? Our third thing about the Father is the Father, He expects immediate obedience. He wants us to work today. Remember that parable? He told both sons, go work today.

Not tomorrow, not next week, not when it feels right to you. Today. Right? Delayed obedience, it's really just disobedience. Hebrews 3, 15.

While it is said, today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. What we do is more important than what we say we will do. If you've never accepted Christ as your Savior, today is the day to say yes to God.

2 Corinthians 6, 2 says, behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation. Not tomorrow. But also, if you're a believer and you've quit working, you know, I've heard all the excuses.

[26 : 10] I'm tired. I'm worn out. You know, someone says something mean to me at church. I've heard all of them. If you've quit working, though, it's time to get back to work.

Proverbs 27, 1. Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

James 4, 13 through 17 says, go to now, ye that say, today or tomorrow, we will give and, we will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain.

Whereas, ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that.

But now, ye rejoice in your boastings. All such rejoicing is evil. Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

We are supposed to do it immediately and the Father expects it. Fourth, the Father is gracious even when we don't go. He loves to redeem failures.

[27 : 18] This book is full of failures and he loves to use and redeem failures. 2 Peter 3.9 says that he will wait until we repent. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Fifth, the Father desires repentance more than self-righteous religious ritualism. 1 Samuel 15.22, and Samuel said, hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of the rams. God is not looking for polished religion while the heart stays hardened and stubborn.

He would rather see a sinner humble themselves in repentance and obedience than watch someone go through all these impressive religious motions without any true submission.

real repentance is not measured by what we say or how religious we may appear, but it's by a heart that bows to the Father's will.

[28 : 35] What we do is more important than what we say we're going to do. And even though the main point of this parable has to do with our relationship with our Heavenly Father, I believe that also that we can draw out six parenting principles from this story also.

Once again, it's a small parable, but it's filled with so much for us. Let's look at some parenting principles this morning. Now, believe it or not, first century parents were faced with many of the same things that parents face today.

And as parents, we need to put these principles into practice. First, talk tenderly to your children. The father, he used the affectionate term son when he addresses his boys.

You know, it hurts me to hear some of the things that parents say to their children. My wife Rachel's here. We have three daughters that are down with the children right now, but there's many times I'll text her and be like, I'll be out with the girls doing something.

I'll hear a father, especially father, say some things to their kids. I'll text her like, can you believe this father just said this to their child? And it hurts hearing how these parents talk to their children.

[29:45] Parents, and specifically fathers, we have a heavy responsibility to not do anything that would cause our children to despair. Ephesians 6, 4, and ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Now, I'll admit that this is something that, you know, maybe sometimes I can struggle with. You know, sometimes I just try to just brush it off by saying, you know what, I grew up as a boy, raised as a boy, you know, that mindset of, hey, I'm going to push you as hard as I can, no blood, no foul, be tough, man up.

I'm not saying I didn't like that. I thoroughly enjoyed it. It made me into who I am today. And I appreciated the way that I was raised. And it worked very well. But it is something that I try to do better at, especially with having three little daughters.

It's to be tender with my children. Now, that doesn't mean to be effeminate. It doesn't mean to be weak, but to be tender so that they won't resent me as a father and in turn resent their heavenly father.

So we need to talk tenderly to our children. Second, lovingly lead your family. Now, I recognize that many fathers have fallen short in this area. And as a result, there are many mothers that have stepped in to fill that gap.

[31:10] And I am deeply thankful for those godly mothers and those grandmothers who have stepped up and they have embraced that responsibility. And we see a wonderful example of this in 2 Timothy 1.5 where Paul speaks of Lois and Eunice, a grandmother and a mother whose sincere faith was passed on to Timothy and helped shape him from a very young age.

But I want fathers to hear this very clearly. You are the God-ordained head of your home. And God has given you the responsibility to bring up your children in the training and the instruction of the Lord.

Mothers and grandmothers, they may help fill that gap and I and we thank God for them. But fathers must not surrender the role that God has given them.

You are called to lead your family as God intended. Three, you need to raise your kids to work. The father in this parable had every right to give work to his sons.

We are a culture that's kind of turning into a culture of laziness and entitlement where many feel like everyone else owes me something. Chores are a good thing.

[32:24] Lamentations 3.27, it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Work teaches responsibility, discipline, perseverance, and also service to others.

A child who never learns to work often will grow into an adult who expects life to revolve around them. Parents, parents do their children no favors by removing every burden, every responsibility and every expectation from their children.

Sometimes love, it looks like handing a child a broom, giving them a job to do and teaching them you need to finish what you have started. So raise your children to work.

Fourth, teach your children to respect those in authority. The second son, he does address his father with respect. We have to help our children learn how to do this by having them use titles like Mr., Mrs., Sir, Ma'am.

You know, a little please, a little thank you. It can go a long way. But respect doesn't just magically appear in children. It has to be taught.

[33:34] It has to be practiced. And the way children learn to speak to parents, speak to grandparents, teachers, other adults, authority figures will usually carry over into the rest of their life.

Those things, it might seem small, but it does matter. Simple manners and respectful speech that help fight against the selfishness and entitlement that are so common in our culture today.

Five, expect immediate obedience from your children. Too many parents are lax in this area. But we see the father, he says, go work today. Not tomorrow, not when it works out in your schedule, not when you can fit it in.

He tells his sons, today. Children have an obligation to obey, and we must insist that they do.

Ephesians 6, 1-3 says, children, obey your parents and the Lord for this is right.

Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth. Obedience is not optional in the home.

[34 : 41] It is commanded by God. And parents are not helping their children by allowing constant defiance, disrespect, or rebellion to go unchecked.

One of the loving things a parent can do is to teach a child to obey authority while they are young. Because a child who never learns obedience at home is often going to struggle with authority elsewhere as they grow older.

Then we have our last parenting principle, don't despair in the face of disobedience. Now some of you, maybe right now, have children who are rebelling, who are disobeying right now.

Don't lose heart. Keep praying, keep loving on them, keep praying for them, and keep holding on to hope that your prodigal will return soon.

In this parable here, the first son, he was openly defiant. And we do see that eventually he does repent and he does obey. The second son, he looked compliant on the outside, but inwardly, he was stubborn.

[35 : 48] He was unwilling. This reminds us that parents cannot always see everything going on in a child's heart, especially immediately. And God is still able to work in ways that we cannot see.

Now while I didn't always practice immediate obedience growing up, I'm thankful for everything that my father taught me. I watched my father constantly. I spent probably more time with him than probably anyone on earth right now.

No one has spent more time with him. Even now, I'll say or do some things around the house and my wife or sometimes my daughters will laugh at me and say, that sounds like grandpa or grandpa does that.

But what they don't realize is that many of those things that I've learned from my father are things that he learned from his father. And that's a reminder that the investment parents make in their children often can show up years later.

sometimes the lessons that you teach, the example that you set, and the values that you model take root deeper than you realize at the time.

[36 : 58] Now in closing, this parable leaves us with a simple but searching truth. God is not impressed with what we say we will do.

He is looking at what we are actually going to do. That first son got off to a terrible start. I will not. But he finishes well. The second son, he sounded right.

He looked right. He spoke right. But he never obeyed. And that's where this lands us. It's possible to sit in church to say the right things, to nod at the right moments, to aim in at all the messages, and even intend to obey someday, yet never really step into the vineyard.

Talk is cheap, but obedience will cost you something. It's going to cost you your pride, but pride costs you your comfort, and it's probably going to cost you your plans, but it is always worth it in the end.

I'm going to ask that you stand and that every head be bowed and every eye closed. I'm going to ask musicians to come forward. And before I hand this invitation time over to Pastor Smith, I want to leave you with this.

[38 : 09] Maybe today you see yourself in that first son. You've said no to God in the past. You have resisted. You have delayed or you've walked your own way.

Here's the good news. As long as there is breath in your lungs, there's still time to repent. There's still time to go. The Father, He is still calling. The vineyard, it is still there and His grace is still available to you.

Don't let your past rebellion convince you that it's too late because it's not. A changed mind that leads to a changed life is exactly what God desires.

Or maybe if you're honest this morning, you're more like that second son. You have said all the right things. You look the part. But deep down, there's been little real obedience.

There's no real surrender. There's never really been follow through. Today, the invitation is clear. Stop just saying yes and start actually living it.

[39 : 09] The Father is calling you to act today. If you need salvation this morning, come. If you need to repent, come. If you need to get back to working in the vineyard, come.

Don't leave here today just being a hearer only. Be a doer of the Word. It's not enough to nod our heads in agreement if we never put God's truth into practice.

Real faith is revealed not merely by what we say, but how we live and how we obey. Because in the end, it's not the one who says, I go, sir, who pleases the Father.

It's the one who actually goes. So as we're about to enter this time of invitation, now will be your time to respond to the Lord's leading. Let's pray. Dear God, thank you for this message this morning, God, in the parable of the two contrasting people.

God, we have the rebellious, but we have the religious, God. God, I'm sure there's probably someone here today, God, that they're struggling. God, they're like, I know all the right things to say. I know how to act.

[40:08] I know how to make everyone think I am something that I'm not, and they're struggling this morning, God. God, I pray, give them the power to come forward, God, and to lay that burden down, to seek after you, to, God, not just be a hearer of the word, but to be a doer also.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen.